

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

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R 171120Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, NP

SUBJECT: NEPALESE CONGRESS LEADER REAFFIRMS FAITH IN MONARCHY

REF: KATHMANDU 3353

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL SUBARNA SHUMSHER, PRESIDENT OF BANNED NEPALI CONGRESS PARTY AND LEADER OF ITS CONSERVATIVE WING, ISSUED STATEMENT OCTOBER 12 IN KATHMANDU WHICH, WHILE CASTIGATING GOVERNMENT FOR FAILURE TO SOLVE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, REAFFIRMED HIS SUPPORT FOR MONARCHY AND LEADERSHIP OF KING KIRENDRA. SUBARNA STATEMENT, WHICH WAS GIVEN WIDE COVERAGE IN PRESS, COMES AT A TIME WHEN CALLS FOR POLITICAL REFORM OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER ARE INCREASING AND MAY HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY PALACE AS AN EFFORT TO DEFUSE OTHER NASCENT POLITICAL MOVEMENTS WITHIN COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

2. SUBARNA SAID IN HIS STATEMENT (TEXT POUCHES NEA/INS) THAT MONARCHY IN NEPAL WAS "MATTER OF PRIDE AND OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE" AND PLEDGED HIS SUPPORT FOR "ANY ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT
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BE TAKEN BY H.M. THE KING TO MEET THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL

CRISES OR ANY ACTIONS TAKEN FOR THE PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE PANCHAYAT SYSTEM."

3. ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO "FRIENDS," I.E., THE B.P. KOIRALA-LED WING OF THE NCP, SUBARNA SAID THAT TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE WERE NOT THE CORRECT MEANS TO ACHIEVE THE DEMOCRACY IN WHICH THEY PROFESSED TO BELIEVE. HE OBSERVED THAT "SOME PEOPLE RESIDING IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY WERE IGNORANT OF THE REAL SITUATION IN THEIR OWN LAND AND WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING THE COUNTRY INTO DEEPER CRISIS." SUBARNA URGED HIS "FRIENDS" TO ENGAGE IN "CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES WITH FULL FAITH IN THE CROWN, THE MONARCHY AND THE SUPREME AND ACTIVE LEADERSHIP OF H.M. THE KING."

4. ALL WAS NOT SWEETNESS AND LIGHT, HOWEVER. SUBARNA NOTED THAT JUST AS THOSE ABROAD WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT CRISIS, SO WERE THOSE SUPPORTERS OF THE KING WITHIN NEPAL WHO LABELED ANY OPPOSITION AS "ANTI-NATIONAL." HE ALLEGED THAT THERE WAS WIDE-SPREAD DISSATISFACTION WITHIN THE COUNTRY BECAUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DELAYS AND "INDISCRIMINATE USE OF THE SECURITY ACT IN THE NAME OF MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER." STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS, HE CONTINUED, MIGHT RESORT TO UNCONSTITUTIONAL MEANS TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS SINCE UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM "THEY ARE UNABLE TO FIND AN OUTLET THROUGH CONSTITUTIONAL WAYS." THIS SITUATION CERTAINLY GAVE AID TO THOSE WHO PREACH "VIOLENT REVOLUTION." ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES HAD BEEN AGGRAVATED BY THE FAILURE OF HMG TO TAKE "BOLD AND HONEST MEASURES." THIS, COUPLED WITH "CORRUPTION IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY," HAD MADE LIFE MORE DIFFICULT AND GIVEN RISE TO INCREASED DISSATISFACTION.

5. UNLESS THESE BASIC PROBLEMS WERE OVERCOME, ACCORDING TO SUBARNA, THE COUNTRY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE SUBJECT TO THE INFLUENCE OF "DIVISIVE ELEMENTS AND THE PROGRESSIVE DECLINE OF NATIONALISM," A SITUATION WHICH WOULD POSE "GRAVE AND SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES FOR THE NATION." HIS STATEMENT CONCLUDED WITH A CALL FOR H.M. THE KING TO TAKE "SOLID MEASURE TO SOLVE THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION AS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THE COUNTRY."

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6. COMMENT: SUBARNA HAS BEEN IN KATHMANDU FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, OSTENSIBLY TO SEEK AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE CONFLICTING RUMORS WHETHER HIS STATEMENT IS THE RESULT OF A MEETING WITH BIRENDRA, THE STATEMENT WOULD APPEAR TO SERVE SOME PALACE INTERESTS AT THIS TIME. IN ADDITION TO GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF WIDE SUPPORT FOR THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PANCHAYAT SYSTEM, IT MAY HAVE PALACE BLESSING AS A MEANS TO

DEFUSE THE GROWING CALLS FOR EXTENSIVE ALTERATIONS WITHIN THAT INSTITUTION. THE LATEST CALL FOR DEMOCRATIZATION COMES FROM A RATHER AMORPHOUS COLLECTION OF 22 FORMER POLITICIANS AND "SOCIAL WORKERS" LED BY TANKA PRASAD ACHARYA, RISHIKESH SHAHA, MOHAN ADHIKARI AND P. C. LOHANI. AT A MEETING ON OCTOBER 4 THE GROUP ISSUED A MANIFESTO CALLING FOR "PEACEFUL EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT CHANGES IN THE PRESENT POLITICAL SYSTEM." ACCORDING TO ACHARYA THE GROUP WILL "GO TO THE PEOPLE", I.E., WILL CONSULT POLITICAL WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THE RURAL AND URBAN ELITES BEFORE FORMULATING SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. UNLIKE SUBARNA, HOWEVER, THEY DO APPEAR TO BE PUSHING FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF MAJOR CHANGES SUCH AS THE FORMATION OF A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE DCM BOTH ACHARYA AND RISHIKESH DERIDED SUBARNA'S STATEMENT AS GIVING AWAY TOO MUCH TO THE PALACE BY AGREEING IN ADVANCE TO ANY REFORMS THE KING MAY INTRODUCE. THIS, ACCORDING TO RISHIKESH, FAILS TO SOLVE THE BASIC PROBLEM OF IMPOSING REFORM FROM ABOVE, RATHER THAN RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE WHO REMAIN DISENFRANCHIZED UNDER THE PANCHAYAT SYSTEM.

7. IT SEEMS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER EITHER SUBARNA'S STATEMENT OR ACHARYA'S MOVEMENT WILL HAVE MUCH IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON THE REALITIES OF DOMESTIC POLITICS. THEY WILL, HOWEVER, FUEL THE DEBATES WHICH ARE NOW COMING OUT INTO THE OPEN IN THE PRE-CORONATION PERIOD ON HOW BEST TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE WITHOUT RESORT TO VIOLENCE.

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